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Copyright 1989 Times Newspapers Limited  
The Times (London)

May 16 1989, Tuesday

**SECTION:** Issue 63395.

**LENGTH:** 51 words

**HEADLINE:** Vatican scorns theory; Death of Pope John Paul I

**BYLINE:** PAUL BOMPARD

**DATELINE:** ROME

**BODY:**

Signor Joaquin Navarro, a Vatican spokesman, has described as 'fiction' the theory that **Pope John Paul I** allowed himself to die in 1978 because he considered himself unfit for the papacy .

The claim is made by John Cornwell, an established religious writer, in his book A Thief in the Night.

**LOAD-DATE:** September 22, 2000



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COURIER-MAIL

**May 15, 1989 Monday**

**LENGTH:** 273 words

**HEADLINE:** POPE WHO DIED 'OF LACK OF LOVE'

**SOURCE:** QNP

**BYLINE:** AAPINTNEWS

**BODY:**

Pope who died "of lack of love" LONDON.\_ A book on **Pope John Paul I's** sudden death after a 33-day reign in 1978 concludes he felt unfit for the Papal throne and so burdened by the office that he stopped taking vital medication, The Sunday Times said. John Paul I was found dead on the morning of September 29, 1978 in his bed in his Vatican apartment. He was nearly 66 years old and, it was reported, had not been ill. The Vatican said he had died of a heart attack. No autopsy was performed. The Sunday Times is publishing edited excerpts of A Thief in the Night by journalist John Cornwell, who is quoted as saying the Vatican encouraged his investigations in the hope he would conclusively disprove murder conspiracy theories. Theories of foul play, intrigues and power struggles between Vatican colleagues of the Pope developed after the death, fuelled later by a scandal involving the Vatican Bank and its links to the 1982 collapse of the Banco Ambrosiano. In 1984, David Yallop's book, In God's Name, alleged the pontiff had been poisoned because he had intended to crack down on corruption in the Vatican. Cornwell said he found the Pope had been taking medication for a serious blood-clotting condition, according to The Sunday Times. "There is evidence that, not through forgetfulness, he deliberately stopped taking this medication because he could no longer continue as Pope," the newspaper quoted Cornwell as saying. "He died alone at the very heart of the largest Christian community. He died without last rites. He died of neglect and a lack of love," the newspaper quoted Cornwell as saying. Associated Press

**LOAD-DATE:** September 23, 2003



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Copyright 1989 Guardian Newspapers Limited  
The Guardian (London)

May 15, 1989

LENGTH: 422 words

HEADLINE: Vatican 'concealed details' of ailing John Paul I's death

BYLINE: By JOHN EZARD

BODY:

Vatican officials covered up the pitiful circumstances of the death of Pope John Paul I 12 years ago, according to a new book written with co-operation from the Roman Catholic hierarchy.

Far from being a 'smiling Pope' struck down by a sudden heart attack after 33 days in office, he was racked by illness, haunted by a sense of inadequacy and begged for the release of death. At every mealtime, suffering blinding headaches, loneliness and claustrophobia, he asked his private secretary, Father John Magee, 'Why on earth did they choose me?'

The author, Mr John Cornwell, writes, 'The only relief he got was in pacing around a concrete roof garden like a caged animal. By the second week of his papacy, his legs were swelling up to elephantine proportions' because of a blood-clotting condition for which he went untreated although his office was only 100 yards from the Vatican medical headquarters.

The book, A Thief In the Night (Viking, Pounds 14.95), is due out on May 25. Mr Cornwell, an author and journalist, wrote it after a year of tape-recorded interviews sponsored by the Vatican's head of public relations, Archbishop John Foley.

Archbishop Foley was eager to dispel rumours and printed allegations that the Pope was assassinated. But Mr Cornwell concludes: 'The truth is much more shameful. The whole of the Vatican is responsible for the death of John Paul I'

Vatican sources confirmed that symptoms of a grave illness were well-known throughout John Paul I's reign. Yet 'he died alone at the very heart of the largest Christian community. He died without last rites. He died of neglect and a lack of love.'

The error was that the Church had 'nostalgically' chosen a pastoral pope, a simple man of prayer unused to administration.

Mr Cornwall said: 'By remaining silent about the Pope's symptoms on the day he died, those close to him in the Vatican effectively made a death, which involved symptoms clearly visible while he was still alive, appear like a sudden death.'

Vatican 'concealed details' of ailing John Paul I's death The Guardian (London)  
May 15, 1989 Page 60

Excerpts from the book were published in British and Italian newspapers yesterday. These quoted Archbishop Paul Marcinkus, outgoing Vatican Bank chairman, as saying that rumours that he had murdered John Paul were 'completely without foundation'.

He added that the Vatican was 'really a place of washer-women. They go down to the river to wash their clothes but also to wring out every bit of dirt. In a normal life, people have other interests, but here in the Vatican what else is there to talk about?'

**LOAD-DATE:** June 13, 2000



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Copyright 1989 St. Louis Post-Dispatch, Inc.  
St. Louis Post-Dispatch (Missouri)

May 15, 1989, MONDAY, FIVE STAR Edition

SECTION: NEWS; Pg. 2A

LENGTH: 627 words

HEADLINE: BOOK: JOHN PAUL I BROUGHT ON DEATH

BODY:

LONDON (AP) - A new book on Pope John Paul I's death after a 33-day reign suggests that he was so burdened by the task that he stopped taking vital medicine. The Sunday Times is publishing edited extracts from the book, 'A Thief in the Night,' by journalist John Cornwell. The author disputes theories that John Paul I might have been killed by people in the Vatican who were involved in intrigues and power struggles between conservatives and liberals in the Roman Catholic Church hierarchy. John Paul I was elected pope Aug. 26, 1978, and was found dead in the bed of his Vatican apartment the morning of Sept. 29. The Vatican said the pontiff, nearly 66 years old, had suffered a heart attack. No autopsy was performed. Theories of a conspiracy against John Paul I were fueled later by a scandal involving the Vatican Bank, headed by American Archbishop Paul Marcinkus, and its links to the collapse in 1982 of a major Italian bank, Banco Ambrosiano. Roberto Calvi, the head of Banco Ambrosiano, was found hanged under London's Blackfriars Bridge as Italian police investigated the scandal. In 1984, David Yallop alleged in his book 'In God's Name' that John Paul I had been poisoned because he intended to crack down on corruption in the Vatican. Yallop mentioned Marcinkus as a conspirator. Cornwell writes in his book, 'The truth is much more shameful even than if the pope had been murdered. That would have been the work of several criminals or madmen, where in fact the whole of the Vatican is responsible for the death of John Paul I.' 'Tormented by the conviction that he was unfit for the papal throne - a feeling shared by many in the Vatican - John Paul I was allowed to go to the solitary death he had prayed for, untended and uncared for by those closest to him,' the excerpts in the newspaper say. Cornwell says he learned that the pope had been taking medication for a blood-clotting condition that he recognized as a 'matter of life and death.' 'There is evidence that, not through forgetfulness, he deliberately stopped taking this medication because he could no longer continue as pope,' Cornwell wrote. Cornwell said the Vatican had encouraged his investigation, hoping it would disprove the conspiracy theories. No one was available for comment at the Vatican press office.

GRAPHIC: Photo; Headshot Photo - John Paul I

LOAD-DATE: October 22, 1993





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Copyright 1989 Times Newspapers Limited  
The Times (London)

May 14 1989, Sunday

**SECTION:** Issue 8596.

**LENGTH:** 488 words

**HEADLINE:** Pope's death: lies; Pope John Paul I

**BYLINE:** JOHN DAVISON

**BODY:**

THE Vatican lied about the death of **Pope John Paul I**, the man known as 'the smiling Pope'. He did not die suddenly and unexpectedly of a heart attack, as was announced, but had a lonely and agonised death that could have been prevented.

That is the finding of a new book, published for the first time in The Sunday Times Magazine today, which examines the controversy surrounding the Pope's death on the night of September 28, 1978 after a reign of just 33 days.

The book, *A Thief in the Night*, by John Cornwell, is the result of a year-long investigation during which Cornwell, a lapsed Catholic who once studied for the priesthood, was given unprecedented access to the Vatican.

It discounts earlier theories that John Paul I was murdered, but paints instead a picture of intrigue and lack of compassion within the Vatican walls, and reveals a wide-scale cover-up of the true circumstances of his death.

Tormented by the conviction that he was unfit for the papal throne a feeling shared by many in the Vatican John Paul I was allowed to go to the solitary death he had prayed for, untended and uncared for by those closest to him, says Cornwell.

'The truth is much more shameful even than if the Pope had been murdered.

That would have been the work of several criminals or madmen, where in fact the whole of the Vatican is responsible for the death of John Paul I, ' he said.

Cornwell's theory rests on two important findings: first, that the Pope was convinced the Conclave of cardinals that elected him had made a terrible mistake; and second that he was already seriously ill.

The official Vatican explanation that it was a classic 'sudden death' from a heart attack, that the Pope had been in perfect health and that there had been no warning was therefore based on a lie.

Highly placed Vatican sources told Cornwell that from the day of his

Pope's death: lies; Pope John Paul I The Times (London) May 14 1989, Sunday

election John Paul I had worried that he was 'usurping' the papal throne and that by the end he was praying 'a thousand times a day' for his own death. Cornwell also found that the Pope had been taking medication for a serious blood-clotting condition which he recognised was a 'matter of life and death'.

Vatican sources also confirmed that symptoms of a grave illness were well known throughout John Paul I's reign, and several medically qualified people had said that the cause of death was more likely to have been a pulmonary embolism brought about by his blood condition.

On the day of his death John Paul I had complained three times of feeling ill, twice with serious chest pains, but on his own orders no doctor was called. In fact doctors were not even informed of his complaints, and throughout his short reign he was never seen by a Vatican doctor.

In his book Cornwell concludes: 'He died alone at the very heart of the largest Christian community. He died without last rites. He died of neglect and a lack of love.'

**LOAD-DATE:** September 22, 2000



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United Press International

May 14, 1989, Sunday, BC cycle

SECTION: Domestic News

LENGTH: 396 words

HEADLINE: Pope didn't die as Vatican said in '78, book says

DATELINE: LONDON

BODY:

Pope John Paul I did not die suddenly and unexpectedly from a heart attack as the Vatican announced, but had a lonely and agonized death that could have been prevented, The Sunday Times said, quoting a new book.

John Paul I, who was known as "the smiling pope," died the night of Sept. 28, 1978, after a reign of just 33 days at the age of 65.

"A Thief in the Night," by John Cornwell, discounts earlier theories that the pope was murdered but suggests a lack of compassion within the Vatican.

The Times printed excerpts from the book, which is to be released May 25.

Cornwell wrote that the pope was tormented by the conviction that he was unfit for the papal throne -- a feeling shared by many in the Vatican -- and was allowed to go to the solitary death he prayed for, untended and uncared for by those closest to him.

"The truth is much more shameful even than if the pope had been murdered. That would have been the work of several criminals or madmen, where in fact the whole of the Vatican is responsible for the death of John Paul I," Cornwell said.

Cornwell based his conclusion on his findings that the pope was convinced the conclave of cardinals that elected him had made a mistake, and that he was seriously ill before he died.

The official Vatican explanation that the pope's death was from a sudden and unexpected heart attack and he had been in perfect health was a lie, Cornwell said.

Vatican sources told Cornwell that from the day of his election John Paul I had worried he was "usurping" the papal throne and, near the end, he was praying "a thousand times a day" for his own death.

Cornwell said the pope had been taking a medication for a serious blood-clotting condition.

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Pope didn't die as Vatican said in '78, book says United Press International May 14, 1989, Sunday, BC cycle

"There is evidence that, not through forgetfulness, he deliberately stopped taking this medication because he could no longer continue as pope," he said.

Several medical experts said the cause of death was more likely to have been a pulmonary embolism brought about by his blood condition, Cornwell said.

On the day of his death, John Paul I had complained three times of feeling ill, twice with serious chest pains, but on his orders, no doctor was called, the book said.

"He died alone at the very heart of the largest Christian community. He died without last rites. He died of neglect and a lack of love," Cornwell concluded in his book.



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Sydney Morning Herald (Australia)

May 13, 1989 Saturday  
Late Edition

**SECTION:** SPECTRUM; Pg. 81

**LENGTH:** 1175 words

**HEADLINE:** PAPAL BULLIES;  
WHO KILLED THE POPE?

**BYLINE:** RICHARD YALLOP

**BODY:**

THE first thing that should be said about John Cornwell is that he is a thoroughly decent, rather priestly kind of man, befitting the seven years he spent as a seminarian, and he does not appear the kind of man to write a "sensational" book about the death of **Pope John Paul I** to earn a fast buck.

But the book he has written, *A Thief in the Night*, is nonetheless sensational in its conclusion: that Albino Luciani, the simple, godly man who died on September 28, 1978, 33 days after his election as Pope, was forced to his death, psychologically, by a hostile Vatican bureaucracy. Cornwell also believes that the 66-year-old Luciani, who was already a sick man at the time of his election, willingly speeded up his death by not taking life-saving drugs once he was in the Vatican.

The book, tracing the steps which led to John Paul's death, is a moral whodunnit in which Mr Cornwell's idealism, and his offence at the behaviour of some of those within the Vatican, shines through strongly. The death of John Paul has already inspired four books, the best-known being David Yallop's *In God's Name*, which alleges that three Vatican churchmen - Archbishop Marcinkus, head of the Vatican Bank; Cardinal Villot, Secretary of State; and Cardinal Cody, Archbishop of Chicago - acting alone or in concert with other suspects, might have plotted or connived to murder John Paul I. Mr Cornwell dismisses the idea of a murder plot, but he contends that his conclusions are more tragic and shameful than any conspiracy theories.

"The men around John Paul I were callous, hard-hearted and neglectful," he says. "The evidence is inescapable that he didn't want to live, and they weren't particularly concerned about keeping him alive. In a sense, I do for the Papal murder theory what Peter Shaffer did for Mozart in *Amadeus*. The theory was always that Salieri poisoned Mozart, and Shaffer's play illustrates that Mozart wasn't murdered but psychologically squeezed to death. John Paul I was squeezed to death by virtually the whole Vatican."

Mr Cornwell, a 48-year-old Englishman, has spent much of his life studying



PAPAL BULLIES; WHO KILLED THE POPE? Sydney Morning Herald (Australia) May 13, 1989 Saturday

religion or battling with his faith. His mother's side of the family are devout Irish Catholics, and he spent seven years training to be a priest. He left when he was 24, because he had become an agnostic, and he turned instead to journalism, spending 10 years as editor of the Observer foreign news service. He has also written novels and books, and it was research on a book on supernatural religious happenings that took him to the Vatican press office in October 1987. There he had an appointment with Archbishop John Foley, president of the Commission for Social Communications.

During the course of their conversation, Mr Cornwell realised he had landed a scoop. Archbishop Foley was concerned about the adverse publicity the Vatican had received over John Paul I's death, and particularly David Yallop's allegations, and he suggested that Mr Cornwell should write the true story, with the backing of the Vatican.

One of Mr Cornwell's "exclusives" was the 14 hours of interviews he gained with Archbishop Marcinkus, head of the Vatican Bank, which has had to pay \$250 million in compensation to the creditors of the collapsed Banco Ambrosiano, which went under

in 1982 with debts of more than \$1 billion. Its head, Roberto Calvi, was found hanging beneath London's Blackfriars Bridge on June 17, 1982, following the bank's collapse, and it has never been established whether his death was suicide or murder. Archbishop Marcinkus was a friend of Calvi's and did business with him, even after Calvi had been jailed for currency fraud.

The cigar-smoking, golf-playing Archbishop Marcinkus has been painted as the Vatican's arch villain, but Mr Cornwell did not find him so. But what he did discover was an attitude that he found to be widely prevalent in the Vatican: that of a complete split between the religious values that were supposed to be at the core of the Vatican and the worldly way in which the Vatican's administrators went about their business.

Mr Cornwell asked Archbishop Marcinkus why he continued to do business with Calvi after the latter had gone to jail. The gist of the Archbishop's reply was that he had made inquiries about Calvi, and an associate had suggested to him that you were not much of a banker if you didn't get caught. If that was the way of the banking world, so be it.

This split between the sacred and the profane is at the heart of Mr Cornwell's book. When he asked Vatican officials about it, they said: "Oh well, you don't find those values in the Vatican any more than you do in Washington or Whitehall, because it's a political, bureaucratic centre. If you want those values, go to a monastery." I came away thinking these were people much more attached to religious trivia and appearances than to genuine compassion and kindness."

The very fact that Albino Luciani did briefly take those godly values into the Vatican increased the differences between him and those bureaucratic advisers around him. They felt he should not have been elected in the first place. But he had been, precisely because the foreign bishops in the Conclave had wanted a different type of Pope.

Mr Cornwell says: "I think there's overwhelming evidence that, within two weeks of John Paul I becoming Pope, there was a deep sense of disappointment within the Vatican that the Holy Spirit had made a mistake. Almost from the

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PAPAL BULLIES; WHO KILLED THE POPE? Sydney Morning Herald (Australia) May 13,  
1989 Saturday

first day I began my researches, I gathered comments from people in the Vatican about John Paul I that were extraordinarily denigrating. He was criticised as a paltry little man. That alerted me to an aspect of the story that I think other people had missed."

The book was sanctioned by the Vatican to clear them of the charge of murder but it finds them guilty of the broader charge of neglect of Christian values. Mr Cornwell was also disillusioned to find the Vatican was not a single unified body with a common sense of mission, but faction-ridden and, in some cases, obstructive to his work, even though he had authorised access.

Some people simply lied. "You don't expect clergymen to lie, but I found that in trying to protect the Church from scandal, a lot of people happily lied to me. I went to a moral theologian in Rome to see if lying could be justified to avoid scandal, but he said it couldn't.

"I feel very sad about anyone having to work in that dreadful place, the Vatican, and I'm very sceptical about the way the Church is being run, particularly by this Pope, who is autocratic and making it more reactionary. But my experiences did not drive me away from religion.

"As a city, there's always been a tremendous tension in Rome between the sacred and the profane, between high spiritual ideals and the wickedness and corruption of the world. So this is a continuation of something that's been going on in Rome for a long, long time.

But, on the other hand, a lot of Catholics and other Christians are saying it's about time we changed this."

Herald serialisation of A Thief in the Night begins MONDAY.

**GRAPHIC:** Illus: John Cornwell ... "a lot of Vatican people happily lied to me".

**LOAD-DATE:** July 20, 2007



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The Sun Herald (Sydney, Australia)

December 18, 1988 Sunday  
Late Edition

**SECTION:** TEMPO; Pg. 154

**LENGTH:** 69 words

**HEADLINE:** MONEY FROM HEAVEN

**BYLINE:** DORIAN WILD

**BODY:**

DAVID YALLOP's best-selling book In God's Name, which claimed Pope John Paul I was murdered by Mafia and neo-fascist forces inside the Vatican, may be turned into a movie backed by Australian finance.

Actor turned businessman Steven Grives, who bought the film rights two years ago, says he has raised about \$7.5 million of the \$10 million budget. PPL, merchant banking arm of Westpac, is whispered as a likely investor.

**LOAD-DATE:** July 20, 2007



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Copyright 1988 Newspaper Publishing PLC  
The Independent

September 26 1988, Monday

SECTION: Foreign News ; Pg. 8

LENGTH: 318 words

HEADLINE: Vatican admits to cover-up on Pope

BYLINE: From MICHAEL SHERIDAN in Rome

BODY:

THE VATICAN lied when it said that an Irish priest found Pope John Paul I dead in bed on the morning of 29 September, 1978, ten years ago this week, according to a published interview with the cleric, Bishop John Magee.

The Pope was discovered to be dead by a nun, Sister Vincenza, who habitually brought him a cup of coffee at 4.30am, his normal hour of rising. Returning to see the coffee untouched, she entered his bedchamber and found the body. But, says Bishop Magee, in an interview with the Roman Catholic monthly, 30 Days, the then Secretary of State, Cardinal Jean Villot, ordered that an untrue version should be announced by the Vatican spokesman.

This is the first time that one of the protagonists has directly confirmed a Vatican lie over the death of the Pope, whose sudden demise prompted a babel of speculation and a bestselling book, In God's Name, claiming that he had been murdered.

Bishop Magee was serving at the time as the Pope's private secretary. 'Towards 5.30 that morning a sister, in a state of agitation, woke me up: 'The Pope is dead,' she told me,' Bishop Magee is quoted as saying. Sister Vicenza had found the Pope's body in bed. Bishop Magee says he went to the papal apartment, knocked on the door and, hearing no reply, approached the Pope's bed, which was curtained. 'I called the Pope but he made no reply . . . I decided to draw open the curtain and there he was, wearing his glasses, perfectly in order.'

Upon learning of the Pope's death, Cardinal Villot, an elderly Frenchman, decided to tell the world's 700 million Roman Catholics a lie. 'One can't tell the world that the first person into the Pope's bedroom was a woman, even if we're talking about Sister Vincenza,' is how Bishop Magee recalls the Cardinal explaining it. The cardinal is now dead and Sister Vincenza died without ever revealing the full story.

Foreign News Page 8

LOAD-DATE: September 27, 2000



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Copyright 1987 The Financial Times Limited  
Financial Times (London, England)

October 29, 1987, Thursday

**SECTION:** SECTION I; European News; Pg. 3

**LENGTH:** 172 words

**HEADLINE:** Vatican 'Examined Death Of Pope'

**BYLINE:** Alan Friedman, Rome

**BODY:**

The Vatican has disclosed for the first time than unofficial investigation looked into the 1978 death of **Pope John Paul I**, the man known as the "smiling pope," who was found dead in his bed only a month after assuming his papal office.

Cardinals Antonio Samore' and Silvio Oddi have told Il Sabato, an Italian religious weekly, that there was "no mystery" over the death of **Pope John Paul I** and that he died of cardiac arrest.

The cardinals revealed that they interviewed the closest aides to Pope John Paul I, including Father (now Bishop) John Magee, who was the pope's private secretary and Sister Vincenzina, a personal aide.

According to the cardinals, their interviews revealed that the night before his death, at around 9.30, the pope had a telephone conversation in which he spoke to his doctor and complained of ill health.

A best-selling book, In God's Name, has alleged that the "smiling pope" could have been murdered, but the Vatican has never responded directly to the charges contained in the book.





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United Press International

October 28, 1987, Wednesday, PM cycle

SECTION: International

LENGTH: 234 words

HEADLINE: Foreign News Briefs

DATELINE: VATICAN CITY

BODY:

Two cardinals who conducted an investigation into the death of Pope John Paul I in 1978 concluded it was caused by a heart attack and decided against an autopsy in order to discourage gossip, a Roman Catholic weekly said.

'The autopsy was not done because it seemed to us a humiliation for the Holy See, because it would have given rise to gossip,' Il Sabato quoted Cardinal Silvio Oddi as saying.

'If the autopsy had been authorized and it showed Pope Luciani died of natural causes would suspicion have ended? No.'

In an interview with the newspaper, which published its account Tuesday, Oddi said he and the late Cardinal Antonio Samore conducted an informal investigation at the Vatican's request into the death of John Paul I. He reigned as pontiff for only 34 days.

A conclave of cardinals elected Cardinal Albino Luciani of Venice pope Aug. 26, 1978. He died Sept. 28.

The pope 'was worried about the state of his health,' Oddi said. 'We know that the day before (he died) he complained that his legs were swollen and that he had pains in his chest occasionally.'

Oddi said the enormous pressure Luciani was under in his new job probably caused the heart attack.

The cardinal rejected theories the pope was murdered to prevent him from putting an end to financial mismanagement in the Vatican and from restructuring the Roman Curia, or central administration of the church.



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Copyright 1986 Toronto Star Newspapers, Ltd.  
The Toronto Star

August 10, 1986, Sunday, SUN

SECTION: NEWS; Pg. A9

LENGTH: 735 words

HEADLINE: The Pope's stand on women is not supported by Bible

BYLINE: By Tom Harpur

BODY:

On Friday, Sept. 29, 1978, in the early hours of morning, Pope John Paul I - "Papa Luciani" - was found dead in his bed at the Apostolic Palace in the Vatican.

He had been pope for only 33 days. The first announcement from the Vatican press office said he had been discovered by his English-language secretary, Rev. John Magee.

I arrived in Rome the following day and this version was repeated at the first press conference I attended - at about 11 a.m. Sept. 30.

The clamoring reporters were told Magee was unfortunately unavailable for interviews. He had left Rome on urgent business.

The official story, however, was dramatically revised a few hours later. The Vatican, under pressure, then admitted reluctantly that the ill-fated pope had been given a wake-up call by an elderly nun and it was she who first called others for help.

The discrepancy was explained by a natural reticence on the Vatican's part to making public the fact a woman could have access to the papal chambers.

The nun in question at once became a prime concern of the press. But we were told she, too, was out of the city.

In his book, In God's Name, investigative journalist David Yallop makes much of these and other contradictions surrounding the death - he calls it murder - of the smiling pontiff.

I mention them because they help us get a perspective on some of the things the present Pope says about the role of women in the church.

The Vatican was embarrassed in 1978 at having to say a woman was in the pope's bedroom. But anyone who has been in St. Peter's Square during a major event - say, the funeral or the election of a pope - has seen the sisters of all ages watching from the Vatican windows.

When you have been inside the non-public areas of the Vatican complex, as I

The Pope's stand on women is not supported by Bible The Toronto Star August 10, 1986, Sunday, SUN

have been frequently, you know the place couldn't run at all if it were not for the nuns who clean, cook, and type.

There is obviously nothing improper in any of this. The point is not that they shouldn't be there; rather it's the utterly subservient, menial nature of all their work.

There is nothing wrong with cooking, cleaning, typing or whatever. But at no point does Pope John Paul II encounter during his daily routine women who are making key decisions or who are shaping church policies. No major Curia portfolio is held by a female.

I was in the Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington in the fall of 1979 when Sister Theresa Kane confronted him publicly with the pain being caused women by church intransigence over the ordination of women. His face had the stunned surprise and angry hurt of one who has never known a woman to talk back to him. When he recovered from the shock, he patted her paternalistically on the head.

The truth of the matter is that when John Paul repeats, as he did just the other day, his warnings that union between Rome and Canterbury will be gravely jeopardized if the Church of England proceeds to make women priests, and when he tells us Jesus willed only males to be priests, he is demonstrably arguing more from social and emotional grounds than from those of either logic or scripture.

As a special pontifical biblical commission reported to Pope Paul VI in the mid-'70s, there are no strong biblical grounds for excluding women from the priesthood.

As a student of the Bible myself, I will go much farther. I challenge the Pope or anyone else to demonstrate from the Greek text of the New Testament that Jesus Christ himself ever set up or instituted a special caste of Christians to be called priests - male or female.

Jesus is referred to as a priest; there are passages where the total body of believers is described as a holy priesthood. But nowhere do you find Jesus ordaining a special group to be known as priests.

Those who know the present Pope and his major assistant in determining church doctrine and discipline, Cardinal Ratzinger, know that while between them these men have enormous intellectual and other gifts, neither is expert in the actual field of New Testament scholarship.

Being a pope or a cardinal is no guarantee of biblical competence. John Paul, in particular, has his main strength in philosophy and languages. He should stick to these and leave pronouncements on what the Bible says about the role of women to others.

Tom Harpur's latest book is For Christ's Sake, published by Oxford University Press.

LOAD-DATE: May 13, 1999



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Los Angeles Times

June 28, 1985, Friday, Home Edition

**SECTION:** Calendar; Part 6; Page 1; Column 2; Entertainment Desk

**LENGTH:** 1049 words

**HEADLINE:** FILM CLIPS: 'THE CONSPIRACY': FROM THE MAFIA . . . TO THE VATICAN

**BYLINE:** By JACK MATHEWS, Times Staff Writer

**BODY:**

Imagine that the newly elected president of one of the world's largest corporations is about to announce wholesale changes in company policy, unaware that those changes will affect profitable relationships with both the international banking underworld and the Mafia.

Imagine that the night before he makes his big move, an assassin slips him an undetectable potion that prompts a fatal heart attack, and that after a new boss is elected, it's business as usual.

Imagine that all this really happened in 1978, just this way, except that the chief executive was **Pope John Paul I**, and that corporate headquarters was the Vatican.

Now, try to imagine someone wanting to turn this hot potato into a movie.

"This is not an anti-church film," insists producer Richard Martin, who sends "The Conspiracy" into production next month in Dubrovnik, Yugoslavia. "We don't go into religion or philosophy. It's just a good dramatic story."

"What do we think of taking someone's death and exploiting it commercially?" asks screenwriter-executive producer Bill Bairn, anticipating a question. "That's difficult to answer up front. I think it's a story that deserves telling, but I guess the best defense is the people who are doing it."

It is a good list.

Michael Anderson, an Oscar nominee for "Around the World in 80 Days," will direct a cast that includes Paul Scofield, as John Paul, Robert Mitchum as a corrupt Vatican archbishop and Christopher Walken, as the investigative journalist who, in unraveling the financial scandal, becomes embroiled in the assassination plot.

Bairn, who also has eight years invested in a script about a Sicilian underworld leader, says the reporter is the only fictional character in "The Conspiracy," created as a dramatic thread to weave the documented elements together. All others are based on real people and will use the real names.

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FILM CLIPS: 'THE CONSPIRACY': FROM THE MAFIA . . . TO THE VATICAN Los Angeles  
Times June 28, 1985, Friday, Home Edition

Martin and Bairn say their year's research in Italy turned up fresh evidence supporting earlier theories (five

books have been written on the subject, the most recent "In God's Name") that the charismatic John Paul, after only 34 days in the papacy, was murdered.

"The circumstantial evidence is so strong that it's hard not to take it seriously," Martin says.

The detail behind the conspiracy theory is a snarl of dollar signs and death certificates, of complicated events that theorists say link the Vatican bank with large-scale counterfeiting schemes, with American-based organized crime and with

the killings of one key witness and of two police investigators.

Bairn says John Paul provided motives for his murder with his plans to liberalize the Catholic church, and to revamp the Vatican bank. The most likely suspects, he says, were the corrupt Vatican officials the Pope was going to officially oust the next day, their Mafia partners, and P2, a powerful right-wing extremist group determined to prevent changes in church policy.

"The Conspiracy" will apparently advance the theory that all three were involved.

Martin says he was discouraged from trying to shoot the film in Italy ("I was advised . . . that it would be a little dangerous," he says), but found entire areas of Dubrovnik built in the same architectural style of the Vatican.

Cheaper labor costs, and a co-production deal made with Yugoslavia's Inex Films, are reducing the original \$12-million budget to \$8.1 million, Martin says.

Production designer Herbert Westbrook ("A Passage to India") will be responsible for turning Dubrovnik into Rome. Jack Cardiff ("Rambo") is the cinematographer.

"The Conspiracy" is the first of three films that Martin's Cinema Arts Corp. plans to produce with money put up by a group of 80 investors, most of them doctors and lawyers.

Martin, a former documentary film maker, says he is negotiating for distribution rights on "The Conspiracy," which will be ready for release as early as next spring.

Around Easter.

MARKET MOVE: The growing American Film Market is moving up on the calendar, and out of its hotel next year.

The '86 market, the sixth since the independent film companies organized to sell their products to international buyers in the United States, will be held in February instead of March, to put more time between itself and other markets held in May (Cannes) and October (Milan).

The changes were announced at a Thursday press conference at the Hyatt on Sunset hotel, which is losing the American Film Market to the more spacious



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Beverly Hilton.

Other announcements: Norman Katz has been named chairman of the board of the American Film Market Assn.; Jonas Rosenfield, former vice president and executive director, assumes the paying position of president; Tim Kittleson, in addition to continuing as director of the market, will serve as executive director of the market association.

IMPERFECT TIMING: Rolling Stone has egg on its cover this week.

The weekly magazine's "Summer Double Issue" cover uses a photograph of John Travolta and Jamie Lee Curtis, stars of the summer movie dud "Perfect," to promote its two lead stories -- Neal Karlen's profile of Curtis and a cheerful batch of "Perfect" diary notes written by Travolta himself.

Rolling Stone has chased its own tail with "Perfect." The magazine ran the Aaron Latham health-club story that was eventually adapted -- by Latham -- into a screenplay about a Rolling Stone reporter getting his health-club story. The magazine was prominently featured in the movie, and its editor and publisher Jann Wenner agreed to play himself (under a different name).

Now, three weeks into its disappointing release, "Perfect" gets the kind of push from Rolling Stone that most magazines might have given it a month ago. Are they throwing out a life jacket?

"We wanted it in the summer issue," says a spokesperson for Wenner, explaining that the special issue's earlier deadlines would have prevented pulling the story, even if the editors had wanted to. "It was a risk."

Wenner must find it easy reading anyway. Travolta's story, which includes the breathless revelations that the Rolling Stone office has no macrame wall hangings, has this to say about Wenner's screen test for "Perfect": "When I saw the screen test, it was one of the best I'd ever seen. . . . I've never seen a beast like this on celluloid before."

**GRAPHIC:** Photo, Paul Scofield as Sir Thomas More in 1966 film, "A Man for All Seasons," left; Pope John Paul I, right. ; Photo, Rolling Stone cover of summer double issue hyping "Perfect."



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BBC Summary of World Broadcasts

July 31, 1984, Tuesday

**SECTION:** Part 2 Eastern Europe; A. INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS; 1. GENERAL AND WESTERN AFFAIRS; EE/7709/A1/1;

**LENGTH:** 48 words

**HEADLINE:** In Brief;  
Bulgarian weekly on possible motive for attack on Pope

**SOURCE:** Bulgarian Telegraph Agency in English 1753 gmt 27 Jul 84

**BODY:**

Alfred Krispin speculates in the latest issue of the weekly 'Anteni' that the death of Pope John Paul I in 'mysterious circumstances' and the attempt on the life of the present Pope may well be linked to the disappearance of 1,400 million dollars from the bankrupt Banco Ambrosiano.



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United Press International

June 10, 1984, Sunday, PM cycle

**SECTION:** International

**LENGTH:** 453 words

**HEADLINE:** Book claims Pope John Paul I was poisoned

**DATELINE:** LONDON

**BODY:**

Pope John Paul I, who died in 1978, was poisoned in a plot by an Italian secret society that feared the pope's plans to eliminate corruption at the Vatican, a book to be published in Britain claims.

Author David Yallop, in the book "In God's Name," alleges John Paul I was murdered by the P2 Masonic Lodge chiefly because of his planned ouster of American Archbishop Paul Marcinkus as president of the Vatican bank over allegations of shady bank deals with the society.

Yallop said the P2's financial operations depended on the cooperation of Marcinkus' Vatican Bank, which was intertwined with a network of shell companies in Europe, the Caribbean, Central America and South America through which millions of dollars passed and disappeared.

Yallop, after three years of research in the United States and Italy, concludes the drug digitalis was probably used to poison the pope. This would account for the stricken expression on the dead pontiff's face, he says.

"I am completely convinced that Pope John Paul I, Albino Luciani, was murdered," Yallop said, according to an account of the book published in the Observer newspaper Sunday.

A Vatican official, who asked not to be identified, said the murder theory was "so far beyond belief it's not even worthy of comment."

Marcinkus, contacted by telephone at his home, refused to speak to reporters.

John Paul died of an apparent heart attack 33 days after he was elected to the Pontificate at the Conclave of Cardinals on August 26, 1978. Many thought it was a surprising election, and the initial feeling at the Vatican was that John Paul would be an easily manipulated "lightweight," Yallop says.

But he quickly confounded Vatican watchers and showed tough-mindedness on a number of issues, including an investigation into Vatican finances.

Yallop began working on the book after he received a letter "from a group of

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Book claims Pope John Paul I was poisoned United Press International June 10,  
1984, Sunday, PM cycle

people inside the Vatican," said Rome researcher Philip Willan, who also worked on the book.

Yallop says there was a long list of people who had reason to fear the pope was going to move against them and says there was a series of irregular and inexplicable events surrounding his death.

He claims one of the people on John Paul's "list" for removal from office was Vatican Secretary of State, Cardinal Jean Villot, whom Yallop says hastily organized the embalming of the pope's body, making it impossible to carry out an autopsy to see whether John Paul had died of poisoning.

Yallop is skeptical about the heart attack verdict, saying the pope had no history of heart trouble and was in excellent health. Willan said the pope's doctor visited him a few days before his death and found him "perfectly healthy."

